

Institute began to assist in funding the school after the departure of the Freedman's Bureau.⁶¹ Other schools such as Williston and Gregory Normal Institute also boasted similar beginnings and subsequent support of the city's blacks through hard work and determination. Wilmington's black teachers included some of the city's elite with the wives and daughters of the city's most prominent politicians and businessmen working to educate the city's black children.⁶² Still, despite widespread community support for the schools, facilities were often underfunded, and teachers were paid less than white teachers.⁶³

⁶¹ The school property was leased to the city for a free public school in 1897, and the Wilmington Colored Educational Institute filed new articles of incorporation in 1898 under the leadership of Thomas Rivera, Joseph Mitchell, John G. Norwood, Aaron Kellogg, Marsh Walker, and Andrew J. Walker. Reaves, *Strength Through Struggle*, 146-148; New Hanover Incorporations, State Archives.

⁶² Mary Washington Howe, daughter of respected freedman Alfred Howe, was educated in the North and became principal of Williston School. Teachers Katie Telfair, Susie Kennedy, Nellie Chesnutt, and Mabel Sadgwar all were daughters of prominent Wilmington leaders. Reaves, *Strength Through Struggle*, 383, 410, 459, 474; New Hanover County Commissioner Records, State Archives, North Carolina Office of Archives and History, Raleigh.

⁶³ Black teachers in the city averaged \$35.64 per pay period and black schools had an average of \$523.16 spent on them in October to November 1898. In contrast, white teachers for the same pay period averaged \$36.84 and \$858.02 was the average amount spent for school needs. For the 1897-98 school year, 51 percent of the city's black children (2290 students, male and female) attended public schools. Figures for private school attendance are unavailable. Attendance figures, teacher pay and school disbursements will change radically in the years following the riot. For more information on the impact of the riot on the city's educational system, see Chapter 7 and Appendix E. Department of Public Instruction, Superintendents Reports, State Archives, North Carolina Office of Archives and History, Raleigh; New Hanover County Commissioner Records, State Archives.

As the African American community advanced, it developed a distinctive social hierarchy. Lura Beam, a northern white educator who taught in Wilmington after the turn of the century, explained for her readers the difficult intricacies of black social



Williston Graded School, demolished 1915.
Image: Bill Reaves, *Strength Through Struggle*



Mary Washington Howe, Principal,
Williston School
Image: Bill Reaves, *Strength Through Struggle*

classifications. Although Beam was writing ten years after the riot, her account probably parallels the situation of the 1890s. Beam explained that the upper class was the financial equivalent of the white middle class. Borrowing from W. E. B. DuBois' phrase, she termed these men and women